

TOWN OF MANSFIELD/DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, April 18, 2007
Bergin Correctional Institute

Minutes

Members Present: A. Barberet, E. Higgins, C. Lary, C. Paulhus, W. Solenski, W. Stauder, S. Thomas

Members Absent: R. Blicher , G. Cole, R. Gergler, R. Pellegrine, V. Stearns

Staff: M. Capriola, Counselor Cyr, Captain Corey

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting came to order at 3:15 p.m.

II. MINUTES

1. January 17, 2007 Meeting Minutes – Ms. Barberet noted that her name was spelled incorrectly once on page 1. Mr. Solenski made a motion, seconded by Ms. Higgins, to approve the minutes of January 17, 2007. The motion passed unanimously.

III. COMMUNICATIONS

1. March 15, 2007 List of Offenses at DBCI - Ms. Barberet inquired about the “risk to child” offense. Warden Higgins indicated that such offenses typically involve adults involved with drug deals while children are present.
2. Annual Report to State Legislature – Ms. Stauder reviewed the Committee’s Annual Report. The Committee was in support of the report.
3. Articles from Newspapers – The Committee reviewed two articles submitted by Ms. Stauder, *It’s Time to Pay Attention to State’s Prisons*, Willimantic Chronicle and *State’s Prison Population Not Projected to Increase*, Hartford Courant, 2/15/07.

IV. WARDEN’S REPORT AND DISCUSSION

1. Population Status Report – Ms. Higgins reported that the population was currently at 1,073, with 56 inmates out on re-entry. Warden Higgins stated that Bergin’s inmates are Level I and Level II, most of whom are on their way towards re-entering

society. The average stay of an inmate at Bergin is only 60-90 days. Bergin is one of four facilities in the state that only handles Level I and Level II prisoners (i.e. DUI, domestic abuse). Bergin does not house inmates with mental health or medical issues.

2. List of Offenses – Ms. Higgins noted that close to 1/3 of the Bergin population has been required to have domestic violence counseling. Mr. Solenski noted that many domestic violence cases are related to alcohol and drug use. In his opinion, Mr. Solenski believes that domestic violence cases have become more violent over the past 30 years and now often involve the use of weapons such as guns, knives, bats, etc.

V. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman did not have a report for this meeting.

VI. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO SPEAK

There was no one from the public who wished to address the committee at this meeting.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

1. Consolidation of Public Safety and Correctional Facility Liaison Committees – Ms. Thomas inquired as to whether or not it was an internal or external decision to establish the two committees as separate committees. Ms. Capriola discussed the historical and legal research conducted by herself and Ms. Mary Stanton, Town Clerk. Ms. Stanton and Ms. Capriola were not able to find any record of Public Safety Committee minutes from the time frame in which the Liaison Committee was established (mid 1990's). However, on January 1, 1994, Mansfield Town Council created the Liaison Committee in response to Public Act 93-219. Council stated that the Liaison Committee would have the same membership as the Public Safety Committee. Council meeting minutes only referenced that the Liaison Committee would be created based on the recommendation of the Committee on Committees. Further, Ms. Stanton and Ms. Capriola were not able to find any meeting minutes from the Committee on Committees during that same time period. Ms. Stanton and Ms. Capriola researched Public Act 93-219; it appears that the Town was not required to create a Liaison Committee. Ms. Capriola stated that the Liaison Committee may have been created because the community was concerned about prisoners re-entering society and/or conducting work release programs in the community. Ms. Barberet, Ms. Stauder, and Ms. Thomas discussed some

background on the topic. They stated that the Town was concerned about potentially dangerous criminals working and/or living in the community, so the Liaison Committee may have been a way to ensure safety of citizens while lowering recidivism amongst inmates. Ms. Thomas stated that the two committees should become one merged Public Safety Committee, with education and program outreach always listed on the agenda. Ms. Barberet requested that Ms. Capriola provide the Committee with the statute that created Public Safety Committees. Ms. Higgins stated that the statute was broad in that communities and wardens have the ability to set the agenda for Public Safety Committees. Ms. Thomas further stated that if the statute is broad in nature in terms of setting the agenda of the Committee, then we should proceed with merging the committees. It was agreed to review the statute at the next meeting.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to discuss.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maria Capriola
Assistant to Town Manager

TOWN OF MANSFIELD CORRECTIONAL FACILITY LIAISON COMMITTEE

April 18, 2007

Minutes

Members and Staff Present: Same as DOC Public Safety Committee.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting came to order at 3:50 p.m.

II. MINUTES

1. January 17, 2007 Meeting Minutes - The motion to adopt the minutes passed unanimously.

III. COMMUNICATIONS – None

IV. WARDEN'S REPORT AND DISCUSSION

Community Outreach and Programming Updates – Counselor Cyr and Warden Higgins provided the following updates:

- Bergin is still awaiting the arrival of its transitional teacher. The Social Services Counselor, Re-entry Counselor, and Programming Counselor are on board.
- The Culinary program is up and running. The Greenhouse is all set.
- The Basketball Courts will be completed when the weather warms up to accommodate construction.
- Recruits will graduate from the Academy in May, so barring any retirements, Bergin will be fully staffed by summer.
- Staff continues to work with inmates on achieving their GEDs.
- Inmates are not allowed to have cell phones. During off-site work clearance, some inmates were returning with cell phones. Staff has corrected this problem.
- Bergin has substance abuse counselors.
- Bergin has introduced gambler's anonymous sessions.
- Domestic violence counseling is offered as a 12-week session. There is a maximum of 10 inmates per group. When inmates are released, they have classes they must continue to attend. If an inmate does not complete his internal and external domestic violence counseling sessions and/or re-commits an act of domestic violence, he will be returned to prison.

The Committee toured the Facility and expressed an interest in returning for another tour while programs and classes were in session. The Committee discussed meeting at Bergin at 1pm for its July meeting. Warden Higgins welcomed the Committee to return for another tour.

V. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO SPEAK

There was no one from the public who wished to address the committee at this meeting.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business listed on this agenda.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business listed on this agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

The Committee adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maria Capriola
Assistant to Town Manager